

2 Forums Will Address Hazardous-Waste Facility

Omaha-area residents interested in the location of a proposed household hazardous-waste facility in the metropolitan area can weigh in on potential sites during two community forums next week.

Ten possible sites in Douglas and Sarpy Counties have been identified and will be discussed at the forums.

Each year, residents of the two counties generate about 2.4 million pounds of waste chemicals.

The facility, being planned by a group of area agencies, would provide residents a place to drop off unwanted paint, pesticides, motor oil, cleaners and other household chemicals, getting them out from under their sinks and out of garages where children could get into them.

The center also would offer environmental benefits by keeping hazardous waste out of landfills and by heading off dumping in ditches, storm sewers and vacant lots. Neighborhood groups will benefit by having a place to take the wastes they collect during annual cleanup days.

Chemicals collected at the center, which will be an enclosed building, will be recycled or shipped to a proper disposal site.

Eight of the proposed sites are owned by Douglas County, Sarpy County or the City of Omaha. Two are private property. Most are industrial tracts, and none are in residential neighborhoods. Efforts were made to keep the sites centrally located for residents of both counties.

The forums will be Tuesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Chalco Hills Recreation Center, 8901 S. 154th St., and Thursday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Firefighters Union Hall, 6005 Grover St.

Environmental Notebook

By Julie Anderson

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Your Opinion Is Needed

Community Forums for the proposed Household Chemicals Collection Facility
 Each year in Douglas and Sarpy Counties alone, approximately 2,400,000 pounds of Household Chemicals are generated. These materials include paint, motor oil, cleaning chemicals, adhesives, solvents and similar items found in and around most homes. Currently there is no appropriate facility to collect these items for recycling or shipment to a proper disposal site. Without a collection facility these chemicals often end up in the landfills or poured down the drain causing potentially unsafe situations or damaging the environment.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Agency MAPA has identified ten potential sites for construction of a Regional Collection Center for Household Chemicals. We need your input. Two Community Forums are scheduled as opportunities for you to participate in this process.

Community Forums will be held on:

Tuesday March 27th. 6 - 8 p.m. Thursday March 29th. 6 - 8 p.m.
 Chalco Hill Natural Resources Center Fire Fighters Union Hall
 8901 S. 154th St. 60th & Grover

for more information call MAPA at 444-6866 or visit:

UnderTheSink.Org
of Douglas and Sarpy Counties Nebraska



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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2001

METRO AREA

Chemical Drop-Off Sites Discussed

BY JULIE ANDERSON
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Questions about where to build a proposed metropolitan-area drop-off facility for household hazardous waste and how to pay for it arose at the first public forum on the issue Tuesday night.

The meeting focused on 10 possible sites for the facility identified in February by a group of local agencies seeking to build the Omaha area's first regional collection area for old paint, pesticides and other household chemicals.

None of the handful of people attending the forum objected to the idea that some method was needed to handle chemicals found in garages and under sinks. A second forum is set for 6 p.m. Thursday at the Firefighters Union Hall, 60th and Grover Streets.

Douglas and Sarpy County residents generate about 1,200 tons of waste household chemicals a year, or about 20 pounds a person.

Steve Oltmans, general manager of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, said the project partners have heard little opposition to any of the sites.

Nor do they anticipate a lot, because of the criteria used to select the sites. Eight of the sites already are owned by public agencies participating in the project. All are situated in industrial areas and are not close to residential neighborhoods.

One site near Interstate 80 and 60th Street, however, will be crossed off the list because a more detailed records search indicated that it belongs to the State of Nebraska.

However, Tim Krajicek, a member

of the Papio NRD board, said he would feel more comfortable with a site that was not so close to the Papio Creek system and other waterways. Spilled chemicals could run into streams.

He said he would prefer a facility between Omaha and Lincoln that could be shared.

Another person asked how the agencies plan to pay for the facility, which will cost an estimated \$1.1 million to build and about \$420,000 a year to operate.

Both Douglas and Sarpy Counties already have added to landfill fees, which should raise about \$110,000 a year.

Jerry Leahy, a Douglas County official, said the partners also hope to receive additional grants from the state through a fund that receives \$1.25 a ton in landfill tipping fees.